

# **Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 October 2012**

**Portfolio: Finance & Technology**

**Subject: Wireless Broadband within the EFDC area**

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**Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry**



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## **Recommendations:**

- 1. To receive an update on initiatives by the District Council to help improve Broadband connectivity speeds across the district.**
- 2. To establish whether members wish to raise any other issues concerning this report for future consideration.**

## **Report:**

- In response to a Members request, the District Council have carried out an investigation into the feasibility of assisting in the provision of broadband connectivity to rural areas currently suffering from slow or no broadband access.
- As part of a wireless connectivity link required for the EFDC Disaster Recovery project, the Invitation to Quote issued also allowed for the supply of a separate wireless broadband link into the EFDC area which would deliver Super-Fast Broadband to residents and businesses through radio links rather than old fashioned copper phone lines.
- The contract was awarded to Buzcom, who have already implemented similar solutions in the Maldon & Uttlesford areas. Radio dishes installed onto the Civic Offices tower now give the coverage shown in Appendix 1 (Area 9). Further information and the latest coverage maps can also be viewed by going to the Buzcom website, [www.fibrewifi.com](http://www.fibrewifi.com) and clicking on the Epping Forest District button. Once selected, this option also allows residents/businesses to register their interest in the service.
- A number of businesses based at Haley's Farm Industrial Units have already connected to the service. They were struggling with connection speed but now have the potential to receive a 25 Mb/s aggregate connection. Whilst not as fast as typical fibre cabled broadband connections, customers currently receiving 1Mb/s through a telephone line, can expect an 8-10 times increase in speed.
- It is important to emphasise that although EFDC have facilitated this initiative, this is a commercial operation and as such, the Authority is not responsible in any way in relation to this service. It is for individual residents and businesses to evaluate the different service providers and enter into their own contracts with the most appropriate supplier.

## **Background papers:**

Appendix 1 – Wireless coverage map.